

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK
RARE BIRD RECORDS
DECEMBER, 2003 - FEBRUARY, 2004

Attached is a list of observations reported by visitors and staff for the period December, 2003 - February, 2004. I've compiled observations for species which are listed as **Sporadic, Rare, Accidental, Hypothetical** or **Not included** (?) on the park's checklist. A "?win" indicates a species which is documented for the park but not in the winter season.

On the heels of a very wet early fall season, the winter season came in very dry. Late November, all of December and the first half of January saw no rain until a front pushed through with rain and colder temperatures from January 16 -18. More late January rains and some good precipitation in February helped pull rainfall totals up to near the previous winter's levels. Some of the coldest weather for the period didn't occur until the end of February when a fast-moving cold and wet front passed through, bringing hard winds, cold temperatures, thunder and lightning, and a light dusting of snow in the highest elevations. A comparison of current precipitation totals through February with the same period last year (+ or -) illustrates the recovery from the early winter dry spell: Panther Junction; 1.24" (-0.21"), Chisos Basin; 1.56" (-0.26"), Rio Grande Village; 1.30" (-0.20"), Castolon; 0.75" (-0.32"), and Persimmon Gap; 0.44" (-1.57").

The annual Christmas Counts (December 28-29) noted good food crop conditions, and species and individual numbers were about average with previous years. The Chisos Circle was hindered by strong winds, but the RGV count had excellent weather conditions. Species of interest included rufous hummingbirds on both counts, Harlan's hawk, Sprague's pipit, yellow and Wilson's warbler, and two slate-colored juncos.

Highlights for the season included several female hooded mergansers in Lajitas and at Hot Springs, a surprising adult gray hawk that overwintered at Cottonwood Campground, and a male **Costa's hummingbird** that stayed in Panther Junction for the month of February. The last documented Costa's in the park was a recently accepted record in the Green Gulch from 5/19/00. Brown creeper observations were again unusually high this winter, and sage thrashers and sage sparrows made good showings at lower elevations.

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK
RARE BIRD RECORDS
DECEMBER, 2003 - FEBRUARY, 2004

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Lesser scaup	7	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	Darren Wallace	rare
Hooded merganser	1f	01/03	Lajitas	Kym Beckwith, Mark Flippo	rare
	2f	01/17	Lajitas	Laird Considine, Mark Flippo	rare
	1f	01/27	Hot Springs	Daniel Paez	rare
	1f	02/24	Hot Springs	Lucas Foerster	rare
American bittern	1	02/16-19	RGV-Nature Trail	Cecelia Neitz, Doug Thompson	early
Gray hawk	1	12/11	Cottonwood Camp.	Florence McGuire	? win
	1	01/25	Cottonwood Camp.	Daniel Paez	? win
	1	01/31	Cottonwood Camp.	Kym Beckwith, Mark Flippo	? win
	1	02/01	Cottonwood Camp.	James Lybarger	? win
	1	02/17	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	? win
Red-tailed hawk (Harlan's)	1	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	Mark Flippo	? win
Prairie falcon	2	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	K.Stinnet,M.Adams	rare
Merlin	1m	02/16	Rio Grande Vill.	Susan Ferguson	rare
Virginia rail	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	???	rare
Greater yellowlegs	1	01/22	Terlingua Creek	Brad Storey	early
	1	01/31	Terlingua Creek	Kym Beckwith Mark Flippo	early
Long-eared owl	2	12/02	Trap Spring	Joe Sirotnak	rare
Elf owl	1	02/28	Boulder Mdw.	Greg Levandoski Lucas Foerster	early
Anna's Hummingbird	3-4	12/01-2/20	Panther Junction	M.Flippo, R.Dean	rare
	3	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	Mark Flippo	rare
Costa's Hummingbird	1m*	02/02-23	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo, Rob & Angie Dean	? win

*Texas review species: report to TBRC: Lockwood. Accepted 5/04

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Rufous Hummingbird	1f	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	Mark Flippo	rare
	1f	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	M.Flippo,K.Stinnet	rare
Green kingfisher	1f	01/25	RGV-Daniels Ranch	Mark Flippo	rare
	2	02/06	Lower Canyons	Greg Levandoski	rare
Ash-throated Flycatcher	4	12/29	CBC-RGV	Several observers	spo.
	1	01/02	Lajitas	Kym Beckwith, Mark Flippo	spo.
	1	01/17	Rio Grande Vill.	Mark Flippo	spo.
White-eyed vireo	1	02/20	Rio Grande Vill.	Mark Flippo	acc.
Gray vireo	1	12/07	Grapevine Hills	M.Powell, T.Hanks G.Levandoski	rare
	1	12/29	Burro Mesa Cyn.	P. Petermann	rare
	2	02/26	Rte 12 mp 4	Kelly Bryan	rare
Blue-headed vireo	2	12/16	Cottonwood Camp.	Jan & Will Risser	rare
	1	01/17	Lajitas	Laird Considine, Mark Flippo	rare
Western Scrub-jay	2	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	K.Stinnet	spo.
Chihuahuan raven	2	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	M.Adams,L.Long	rare
	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	???	rare
	2	02/26	Fossil Bone	Kelly Bryan	rare
Tree swallow	1	02/11	Hot Springs	Kim Turley	early
Cave swallow	2	01/31	Terlingua Creek	Mark Flippo	acc.
Brown creeper	2	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	M.Flippo,K.Stinnet	spo.
	1	01/14	RGV-Store	David Defik, Ralph Andrews	spo.
	3	01/26	RGV-Daniels Ranch	Mark Flippo	spo.
	1	01/17	RGV-RV camp	Mark Flippo	spo.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Carolina wren	1	12/04	Santa Elena Cyn	Missy Powell	rare
	1	01/10	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Lockwood	rare
	1	01/11	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	01/14	RGV-Nature Trail	David Defik, Ralph Andrews	rare
	1	02/02	Santa Elena Cyn	James Lybarger	rare
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	01/10	Rio Grande Vill.	Mark Lockwood	spo.
Mountain bluebird	~35	12/06	Bruja Canyon	G.Levandoski, T. Hanks	spo.
Sage thrasher	1	12/03	Mule Ears Tr.	M.Parsons	spo.
	2	12/12	Rte 12	Jan & Will Risser	spo.
	3	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	several observers	spo.
	2	01/15	North Rosillos	Greg Levandoski, Tim Hanks	spo.
Sprague's pipit	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	Darren Wallace	acc.
Nashville warbler	1	01/23	Persimmon Gap	Bill Carlson	? win
Black-throated Gray warbler	1	02/09	Cottonwood Camp.	P.B. Rieaz	early
Yellow warbler	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	Darren Wallace	? win
Wilson's warbler	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	Darren Wallace	? win
	1	01/10	Rio Grande Vill.	Mark Lockwood	early?
Clay-colored Sparrow	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	????	spo.
Field Sparrow	2	12/11	Rte 11 mp2-3	Kelly Bryan	spo.
	1	12/16	Pine cyn. Tr.	Jan & Will Risser	spo.
Sage sparrow	1	12/05	N. Rosillos	M.Powell, G.Levandoski	spo.
	10	01/10	Maverick Road	Mark Lockwood	spo
	3	01/21	N. Rosillos	Greg Levandoski Tim Hanks	spo.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Grasshopper Sparrow	2	12/11	Burro Mesa PO	Kelly Bryan	spo.
	1	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	Darren Wallace	spo.
Lark bunting	5	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	????	spo.
Fox sparrow	1	12/14	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	spo.
	1	01/02	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	spo.
Dark-eyed junco (Slate-colored)	1	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	???	rare
	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	???	rare
	1	01/10	Chisos Basin	Mark Lockwood	rare
Chestnut-collared Longspur	2	02/26	N. Rosillos	Kelly Bryan	early
Red-winged Blackbird	3	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	???	rare
	3f	01/15	RGV-Nature Trail	J. Biddick	rare
Brown-headed Cowbird	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	Darren Wallace	rare
Orchard oriole	1f	02/20	RGV-Daniels Ranch	Mark Flippo	early
Hooded oriole	1f	02/22	RGV-Campground	Greg Levandoski	early
Cassin's finch	6	12/29	CBC-Chisos Circle	????	spo.